

## **Georgia Department of Natural Resources**

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Noel Holcomb, Commissioner  
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Environmental Protection Division  
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**For Immediate Release**

**March 3, 2009**

### **Watering Restrictions Continue, EPD To Allow Water Efficient Soaker Hoses And Drip Irrigation**

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) announced today that restrictions on outdoor water use will remain in place across 55 north Georgia counties, including the metropolitan Atlanta area. However exemptions for drip irrigation and soaker hoses will be granted to give citizens more water-efficient options to help maintain healthy landscapes during drought.

“Drip irrigation and soaker hoses are high-efficiency outdoor watering devices and have proven to be effective tools in conserving water, particularly during drought,” said EPD Director Carol A. Couch. “We want to offer Georgians more watering choices, but also want to make it clear these exemptions will be withdrawn should water use rise significantly, or if the drought worsens.”

Under an Order issued by Director Couch, Georgians in the 55-county Level Four Drought Response area may water shrubs, trees and flower beds up to three days a week using drip irrigation systems and soaker hoses. Odd-numbered addresses may water on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. Even-numbered and unnumbered addresses may water on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. The exemption does not include turf grass, which requires more conventional types of irrigation that would use significantly more water.

According to state climatologist Dr. David Stooksbury, most of Georgia remains in various levels of drought with the most extreme conditions in the upper Savannah River Basin of northeast Georgia.

Communities and water utilities not dependent on Lake Lanier for their water supply may petition EPD for more lenient outdoor water use schedules. They must show evidence of water conservation through decreased water use and prove their water supplies are sufficient should conditions worsen. To date, 52 local governments, water utilities and industries have been granted watering schedules, ranging from one to three days per week for most types of water use. Those schedules are being extended until further notice. Lake Lanier-dependent communities, including metro Atlanta, are not eligible to petition for relief because the lake remains very low.

Water use in the Level Four area has dropped every month since November 2007 when compared to water use for the same month one year earlier. Rapidly deteriorating conditions and dangerously low lake levels prompted the Level Four Drought Response in September 2007.

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Under a declared **Drought Response Level Four**, most types of outdoor water use are prohibited with some commercial exemptions. In addition to the drip irrigation and soaker hose exemptions announced today, the EPD Director had already ordered exemptions to allow some limited landscape watering.

- Hand watering will be allowed for 25 minutes per day on an odd-even schedule between midnight and 10 a.m. Odd numbered addresses can water on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday. Even numbered addresses can water Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. Hand watering is defined as one person with one garden hose.
- New landscape can be watered up to three days a week from midnight to 10 a.m. for a period of 10 weeks based on the odd/even schedule. Anyone wishing to water new landscape must register with the Outdoor Water Use Registration Program. The program is hosted on the Urban Agricultural Council web site at [www.urbanagcouncil.com](http://www.urbanagcouncil.com). Georgians may also contact their county extension agents for assistance in getting registered.
- In addition, local governments and water utilities that do not depend on Lake Lanier for water supply can petition EPD for more lenient outdoor water use schedules.

The level four drought response area includes Banks, Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dade, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Elbert, Fannin, Fayette, Floyd, Forsyth, Franklin, Fulton, Gilmer, Gordon, Gwinnett, Habersham, Hall, Haralson, Hart, Heard, Henry, Jackson, Lincoln, Lumpkin, Madison, Meriwether, Morgan, Murray, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, Rabun, Rockdale, Stephens, Towns, Troup, Union, Walker, Walton, White, Whitfield, and Wilkes counties.

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Most of middle Georgia remains under a **Level Two Drought Response**. Under Level Two, outdoor water use may occur on scheduled days within the hours of 12:00 midnight to 10:00 a.m.

- Scheduled days for odd-numbered addresses are Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.
- Scheduled days for even-numbered or unnumbered addresses and golf course fairways are Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

The following uses are prohibited under Level Two:

- Using hydrants for any purpose other than firefighting, public health, safety or flushing.
- Washing hard surfaces, such as streets, gutters, sidewalks and driveways except when necessary for public health and safety.

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The level two drought response area includes Atkinson, Baldwin, Ben Hill, Berrien, Bibb, Bleckley, Burke, Butts, Calhoun, Chattahoochee, Clay, Coffee, Columbia, Crawford, Crisp, Dodge, Dooly, Dougherty, Glascock, Greene, Hancock, Harris, Houston, Irwin, Jasper, Jefferson, Jones, Lamar, Lee, Macon, Marion, Mc Duffie, Monroe, Muscogee, Peach, Pike, Pulaski, Putnam, Quitman, Randolph, Richmond, Schley, Spalding, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taliaferro, Taylor, Telfair, Terrell, Tift, Turner, Twiggs, Upson, Warren, Washington, Webster, Wilcox, Wilkinson, and Worth counties.

**A Level One Drought Response** continues in south and coastal areas of Georgia. Under Level One, outdoor water use may occur on scheduled days within the hours of 12:00 midnight to 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight.

- Scheduled days for odd-numbered addresses are Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.
- Scheduled days for even-numbered or unnumbered addresses and golf course fairways are Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.
- Use of hydrants for any purpose other than firefighting, public health, safety or flushing is prohibited.

The level one drought response area includes Appling, Bacon, Baker, Brantley, Brooks, Bryan, Bulloch, Camden, Candler, Charlton, Chatham, Clinch, Colquitt, Cook, Decatur, Early, Echols, Effingham, Emanuel, Evans, Glynn, Grady, Jeff Davis, Jenkins, Johnson, Lanier, Laurens, Liberty, Long, Lowndes, McIntosh, Miller, Montgomery, Mitchell, Pierce, Screven, Seminole, Tattnall, Thomas, Toombs, Treutlen, Ware, Wayne and Wheeler counties.

More information about the drought and water conservation can be found at [www.georgiaepd.com](http://www.georgiaepd.com), [www.conservewatergeorgia.net](http://www.conservewatergeorgia.net) and [www.georgiadrought.org](http://www.georgiadrought.org).

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**STATE OF GEORGIA  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DIVISION**

**To: All Water Users in Georgia Counties Under State Drought Response Level 4**

**ORDER**

**WHEREAS,** On September 28, 2007 in response to the record breaking drought and after consulting with the State Drought Response Committee, I declared a level four drought response across the northern third of Georgia which prohibited most types of outdoor water use; and

**WHEREAS,** The following counties are designated as being under State Drought Response Level 4 due to the existing exceptional drought and the subsequent threats to the water supply in these areas:

Banks, Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dade, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Elbert, Fannin, Forsyth, Franklin, Fulton, Gilmer, Gordon, Gwinnett, Habersham, Hall, Haralson, Hart, Heard, Henry, Jackson, Lincoln, Lumpkin, Madison, Meriwether, Morgan, Murray, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Polk, Paulding, Pickens, Rabun, Rockdale, Stephens, Towns, Troup, Union, Walker, Walton, White, Whitfield, Wilkes, and

**WHEREAS,** Although Georgia remains in a serious drought, water storage in lakes and reservoirs has improved and Georgians have demonstrated their dedication to a culture of conservation by reducing water use; and

**WHEREAS,** Despite the continuing drought conditions, EPD has determined that allowing flexibility in outdoor watering exemptions will not jeopardize the state's water supply sources or adversely affect others that depend on Georgia's water resources; and

**WHEREAS,** It is in the best interest of everyone who depends on Georgia's water resources to promote more efficient water use practices; and

**WHEREAS,** Water use is important to the quality of life and the social and economic stability of the State.

**NOW, THEREFORE,** pursuant to Section 391-3-30-.04 (6) of the Georgia Rules for Outdoor Water Use (the Rules), it is hereby **ORDERED** by the Director of the Environmental Protection Division, Department of Natural Resources, State of Georgia, pursuant to her authority under the Groundwater Use Act, Water Quality Control Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Georgia Drought Management Plan, Georgia Rules and Regulations for Water Quality Control (Rules) and Georgia Rules for Outdoor Water Use;

**IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:**

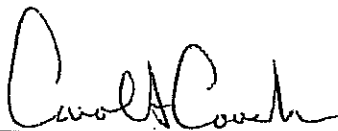
That for the purposes of this order, "plants" mean trees, flowers, vines, and shrubs and shall not mean lawn grass or turf;

That "drip irrigation" means the use of an irrigation system manufactured and sold specifically for delivering water through small flexible pipes and emitters slowly and directly to the soil around the base of individual plants in a manner that minimizes evaporative losses, pooling, runoff and wetting of plant foliage. This type of system may be a part of a larger automated irrigation system or may operate as a standalone system connected to a typical outdoor faucet;

That "soaker hose" means a hose that is connected to a typical outdoor faucet and that is manufactured and sold specifically for delivering water slowly and directly to the soil around the base of individual plants by allowing water to seep from it in a manner that minimizes evaporative losses, pooling, runoff and wetting of plant foliage;

That each household, business or other institution or property owner may use drip irrigation or soaker hoses to water existing landscaping, one hour per day, three days per week, within the hours of 12:00 midnight to 10:00 a.m. as follows: Odd-numbered addresses may water Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays and even-numbered addresses may water Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

It is so ORDERED this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of March, 2009.



Carol A. Couch, Ph.D., Director  
Environmental Protection Division  
Department of Natural Resources  
State of Georgia

Effective May 12, 2008

